

CREEPY
#125



FEB. 1981

CREEPY

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NOV. 8

**"ONCE UPON A
CHRISTMAS EVE..."
THE HORRORS OF HELL
CRAWLED UPON
THE EARTH!**



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SIX SIZZLING TALES!



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RAY GALLARDO
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Production

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Advertising Production

SARA CABAN
Typesetter

Cover
KEN KELLY

Writers
MANUEL AUAD
ROY KINNARD
ROGER MCKENZIE
WILL RICHARDSON

Artists
AURALEON
ANTON CARAVANA
CARMINE INFANTINO
ALEX NINO
MIKE SAENZ
MARTIN SALVADOR
ALEX TOTH

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CREEPY

NUMBER 125

FEBRUARY 1981



UNCLE CREEPY 4

Our fans gave us rave reviews for the return of such popular oldtime Warren artists as Dan Adkins and Alex Toth in **CREEPY** #123!



CHRISTMAS EVE 6

Every Church is built over a gateway to Hell. Yet, on Christmas Eve, the gateway opens and Satans minions run rampant!



PRIVATE DEMON 19

It dwelled within him... a blood-lusting killer demon struggling to get out and wreak havoc upon those people he loved dearly!



TOP DOG 28

There was a new Crime King in town! He just walked in and took over! Everyone feared him except those who laughed at his red alibi!



CIRCUS 36

Jacque Cocteau's Circus of the Bizarre travelled the backroads and small towns. It featured the most horrifying creatures alive!



SWORD 41

The slave knew that if he could only reach the swamp he would be safe! From its secret depths he would plan his terrible revenge!



DEATH CAMP 47

We were hustled onto the trains. We were being sent to the death camps. Yet, none of us were afraid, for we were already dead!



KNIGHT ERRANT 55

The monster opened its reeking maw and flames belched forth, bathing the knight with the hideous foretaste of Hell!

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Dear Uncle Creepy



CREEPY #123 was a very uneven issue, with a few good things... but even more had things going for it.

The lead story, "The Plague," is a good example of what happens when a strong artist like Alex Toth is allowed to ink a weaker artist's pencils. Toth's dramatic and distinctive style totally eclipsed Leo Sommers' art, to the point that any contribution that Sommers made was totally unnoteworthy. The story's script by Doug Moench was a lot less than mind boggling. "The Plague" had all the earmarks of a Moench rush job!

I just love blood-chilling ghost stories. It's too bad that Carl Weselizer and Martin Salvador couldn't come up with one in their contribution to **CREEPY** #123, "Hands Of Fate." The story was a hackneyed, cliché piece of garbage, not fit to see print in a Warren magazine.

Gerry Boudreau, Carmine Infantino and Alfredo Alcala, on the other hand, can all stand up and take a bow! "They Don't Make Movies" was a really fine story. It could only have been better if it hadn't been surrounded by all the other trash in the issue.

"The Slave" was yet another disappointment. Both the art, by Jamie Brodal and the script, by Alabaster Redstone, were terrible! It was even more disappointing for me, because I had genuinely looked forward to the story after seeing Ken Kelly's superb painting.

"Harriman's Monsters" created the feeling of *de ja vu*. I felt as though I had read the story somewhere before. I had! The story was a simple rehash of every trite monster movie I've ever seen.

Finally, there was the unnotable "Jelly," which presented Nicole Cuti and Herb Arnold at their worst! It was yet another example of trite predictability, which was little more than an insult to my intelligence. I would like to thank that Warren Publishing has some respect for my intelligence.

DONNIE GILL
N.Y., N.Y.

It was nostalgia week at the old homestead with **CREEPY** #123. Instead of being treated to such outstanding new talents in the comic field, like Paul Gulacy, we were inundated with the ever old hacks as Dan Adkins, the ever boring Martin Salvador and the funny book world's only living refugee from the nineteen fifties, Carmine Infantino.

PAUL GROVES
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Alex Toth seems to have become a regular Warren artist once again! I can't think of a more talented illustrator in the field today. His stories, whether he is working in stark black and white, or employing lush tones, are always the highlights of any issue in which they appear.

This was the case with Toth's latest effort, "Kiss of the Plague," in **CREEPY** #123. It was the artistic standout of the issue!

PAUL LAMBRETTI
New Haven, Conn.

CREEPY continues to resist the switch to fewer but longer stories that has infected its sister magazines, **EERIE** and **VAMPIRELLA**. And in a way, that's a good thing! Of the seven stories to be found in issue #123, several were at least good enough to stir my interest!

By far the issue's best story was "Always Leave Them Laughing," by Michael Fleischer. His portrayal of a grim old man on the verge of death was outstanding.

Another noteworthy story was "They Don't Make Movies." This was grim tale which, showed two honest men forced to commit kill in order to attain some semblance of justice in our society. This is a chilling concept, which I hope is not repeated in life!
T.M. MAPLE
Toronto, Canada

There is no doubt in my mind that the best story in **CREEPY** #123 was the superb Carmine Infantino/Alfredo Alcala masterpiece, "They Don't Make Movies." I never would have thought that two artists with such diverse artistic styles could have collaborated so well together. Warren Publishing and its editors ought to be commended for coming up with such an improbable, yet spectacular combination!

Not merely was the story's art the best in the issue, but the script by Gerry Boudreau was truly outstanding! It is the best Boudreau script I've read in years! If Boudreau could only turn out more stories of such high quality, then he could be the best writer in the comic industry.

JASON LANGLY
San Francisco, Calif.

**Dear
Uncle Creepy**
GO
Warren Publishing Co.
145 East 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10018

I have decided that if **CREEPY** #123 were to be judged on a scale of one to ten, it would rate a 7.5.

The "Kiss of the Plague" was an interesting story, but I've seen the plot far too many times before. Therefore, I had to rate the script at a possible 6.0 out of 10. The art by Leo Sommers and Alex Toth was excellent, however, and rated an easy 8.5.

"Hands Of Fate" had a nice ending that wasn't overly violent. That garnered the script a 7.5. Martin Salvador, the artist, never seems to fit any of the stories he illustrates, though. He deserves no more than a mere 6.0 for his efforts on the story.

"They Don't Make Movies" had that man twist ending which allowed the end to justify the means. By that I mean that the plot was rather insipid but the ending was spectacular enough to make up for it. The art, by Alfredo Alcala, and Carmine Infantino was, however, the best in the magazine. Bravo to both artists for a superlative job! While I will have to rate the script at 8.0, the art definitely gets a 9.0.

"The Slave" was the weakest story in the issue. The art was stiff and the heroine, Chisels, looked posed in many panels. She may as well have been a model in a women's fashion magazine!

"Harriman's Monsters" was the most exciting story of the month. I also enjoyed the inside information on motion picture animation. It added both dimension and solidity to the story!

"Jelly" could have been the best story in the book if it weren't for its terrible ending. As a result it was transformed into the worst story in **CREEPY** #123. Herb Arnold's art isn't bad. And while he has been accused in the past of swiping Rich Corben's style, it's clear to me that at least Corben knows how to draw. Arnold never will!

Each of these stories rates a mediocre 7.5, thus bringing the overall average of **CREEPY** #123 to 7.5. Certainly not the best score possible. But far from the worst, either!

JEFF KILLIAN
Wichita, Kan.

CREEPY #123 was the kind of issue that reminded me of the early sixties, when I first began to read horror and fantasy magazines. It was such a nostalgic experience to come across all those old names: Ken Kelly, Gerry Boudreau, Nicole Cuti and Dan Adkins.

Of course, the issue was terrific!
GORDON MANLY
Portsmouth, Va.



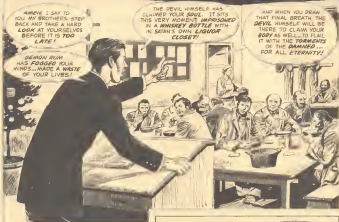
WELCOME LITTLE
FIENDS! YOU HOLD IN
YOUR HANDS **UNCLE CREEPY'S**
MOST GRUESOME HOLIDAY
PACKAGE EVER!

THIS ISSUE
FEATURES **SEVEN**
OF MY BEST **TERROR-**
PACKED STORIES! THEY'LL
LEAVE YOU **GOZING** WITH
GORE-FILLED PUSTULES
OF BLOOD-DRENCHED
FRIGHT!

SO, COME ALONG WITH
YOUR FAVORITE **UNCLE!** MEET
YOUR OWN PRIVATE **DEMONS!**
ROMP IN A BIZARRE CIRCUS OF
FREAKS! SEE **GHOULS** AND
BOYS, **MONSTERS** AND
VAMPIRES! A MORE
CHILLING CHRISTMAS
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE!

Reddy 1/28/88

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS EVE!









SLEEP CAME QUICKLY AND EASILY!
IT WAS A DEEP, ALCOHOLIC SLEEPER
THAT WENT UNDISTURBED EVEN BY
THE LOW RUMBLINGS...THE PAINT
SCRATCHINGS AND TINY SCAMPING
FEET WHICH COULD BE HEARD
BENEATH THE OLD CHURCH!



N-WHA--P



LORD IN
HEAVEN...
N-WHO!

THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF
THEM, TINY, LOATHSOME
DEVIL-THINGS THAT SMELLED
OF THE PUTRID STENCH OF
DEATH!



THE OLD MAN KNEW
WHAT THEY WANTED!
YEARS AGO, THEY HAD STOLEN HIS SOUL! NOW THEY
WERE AFTER...THE BOYS!

YET, ON THIS MOST
HOLY OF NIGHTS...
A SOUL WOULD
NOT BE LOST
WITHOUT
A FIGHT!



SWEET
JESUS!

PREACHER...HELP ME...
SAVE ME, FATHER! THEY
HAVE ME!





THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO. THE OLD MAN KNEW... IF HE WERE TO **SAVE** THE MORTAL SOUL FROM THE **ETERNAL DAMNATION** THAT HAD RENDERED HIS OWN EXISTENCE SO **MEANINGLESS!**



I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR **HELP**, MY LITTLE FRIENDS...

HE CHOKED BACK HIS FEAR... AND SLOWLY DESCENDED INTO... THE DARK NETHERREALM OF **HELL!**



DON'T ABANDON ME NOW!

HE WAS A **GIANT** AMONG THE DEMONIC HORDES OF THE DARK REALM... YET, HIS STRENGTH... HIS SIZE GAVE HIM NO **EDGE!**



HIS FLESH CRAWLED AS HE PURSUED SATAN'S MINION DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE STENCH-FILLED CAVERN WORLD! TERRORS GRIPPED HIS CROWN IN A STEEL VICE AS HE HEARD THEIR CHILLING LAUGHTER... EDGING HIM ON... TAUNTING HIM TO FOLLOW...

...IF HE DARED!





YET...THERE WERE STILL SO MANY DANGERS TO
OVERCOME...!

WOULD HIS NEW-
FOUND STRENGTH
OF PURPOSE...
BE ENOUGH?

WOULD THE RIGHTEOUS STRENGTH OF 6000
BE SUFFICIENT?

NEVER FOR AN INSTANT DID THE WAYWARD
CLERIC EXPERIENCE DOUBT!

HIS SOUL WAS AGAIN HIS OWN...AND HIS DES-
TINY IN THE HANDS OF FATE!

A-MAZE IT! OH
GOD, TH-THANK YOU!
DEAR LORD...BE
PRAISED!





WARREN MAGAZINES

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EERIE #156: Begin in a new series from Victor de la Fuente, "Heggrin!" Also included are mind boggling stories such as "Steel Star Itra," the "Red Shot" and "Space Rider!" Snap up this special winter issue today before none are left at the newsstand near you!

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HIS OWN PRIVATE

DEMON!

IT WAS THE NIGHT OF
AUGUST 31, 1888. THE
PLACE WAS LONDON
ENGLAND!

GO, POLLY! Y'GONE T' SAVE
OLD MONTAGUE SH? HEAVEN!
WELL, I'M AFRAID! YOU'RE TOO
LATE, DARLIN'! MUCH TOO
LATE FOR THAT!

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO
HELP, GIRL, BRING ME A FRESH
BOTTLE 'N' AWH... ELSE PUT A
GUN TO ME 'EAD 'N' PULL
THE TRIGGER!

GOD KNOWS,
POLLY, I'D WELCOME
EITHER!

HE'S IN ME, POLLY... DEEP
INSIDE ME! AN' I CAN FEEL 'IM
DIGGIN' AN' CLAWIN'... FIGHTIN' TO
GET LOOSE AGAIN! BUT I WON'T
LET 'IM, GIRL! I CAN'T!

SO I KEEPS
'IM DRUNK! IT'S
THE ONLY WAY I
CAN CONTROL 'IM!

HE'S A g-demon,
'E IS! A DEMON!

"I... I STILL 'AVE NIGHTMARES, POLLY, 'BOUT THE FIRST TIME! THE FIRST TIME I LEARNED 'E WAS IN ME!"

"OH, GRAN'ME! LET ME HELP YOU!"

"I'LL HELP YOU DOWN THE STAIRS!"

"THAT'S AWFULLY NICE OF YOU, JOHNNY!"

"I LOVED 'ER DEARLY, BUT SUDDENLY... I WAS OVERCOME BY, BY THOUGHTS SO EVIL, AS TO NOT BELONG TO ANYTHIN' 'AMEN!"



"JOHNNY! NOOOOO!"

"EVERYONE THOUGHT SHE TRIPPED! BUT I KNEW POLLY! I KNEW! HE KILLED 'ER! THE... DRAGON!"





WHO COULD HAVE DONE
SUCH A THING? WHO?

SOB!
OH
SOB!

I KNOW MOMMA!
I DO!



I-IT WAS
WIL, NORMA...
THE D-DEADON!
HE MADE ME
TAKE THE
KNIFE
AN'... AN'...



HE LIVES KNIVES,
MOMMA! HE DOES! HE
LIKES TO...TO TAKE 'EM
AN'...SCHOKE?



I-I
NEVER TOLE
MOMMA! I
WAS AFRAID
O'WHAT 'ED
DO TO ME IF
IF I DID!



BUT IT DON'T
MATTER NOW! I
JUST DON'T CARE ANY
MORE POLLY! LOOK!
THE LADDER'S
ALL GONE...











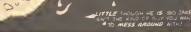
THE SLASHED AND MUTILATED BODY OF POLLY NICHOLS WAS FOUND LATER THAT MORNING. BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL DECEMBER 31ST THAT SCOTLAND YARD DISCOVERED THE LIFELESS FIGURE OF JOHN MONTAGUE, M.D. FLOATING FACE DOWN IN THE THAMES. HIS POCKETS WERE WEIGHTED WITH ROCKS!

SEVEN MURDERS IN ALL HAD BEEN COMMITTED! THE LAST OCCURRING IN NOVEMBER, THESE MURDERS HAVE YET TO BE SOLVED! BUT ONE THING IS KNOWN FOR SURE

JACK THE RIPPER WAS A... DEMON!

prologue OUR STORY OPENS LATE ONE RAINY NIGHT IN DIRTY OLD CHICAGO! THE TIME IS THE 1930'S... THE INFAMOUS PROHIBITION ERA! A SHINY BLACK FORD CARRIERS AROUND A STREET CORNER, ITS TIRES SQUEALING LIKE A SICK BANANEE!

THE SEDAN PULLS TO A HALT IN FRONT OF **LEO'S USED BOOKS SHOPPE!** THE MACHINE GUN WIELDING VERMIN WHO CRAWL FROM THE CAB ARE MEMBERS OF **BIG JAKE PINNEY'S MOB!**



BRAAAAAP!

LITTLE THOUGH HE IS, BIG JAKE SAYS THE KIND OF GUY YOU WANT TO MESS AROUND WITH!

TOP DOG!

LEO'S SPEAKEASY...A LAVISH BAR AND GAMBLING CASINO IS LOCATED DIRECTLY BELOW THE OLD BOOKSTORE. USUALLY A GAY AND HAPPY PLACE, THE ILLEGAL PLEASURE DEN BECOMES A MADHOUSE AS THE MOBSTERS LOOSE THEIR SUB-MACHINE GUNS IN A DESTRUCTIVE ARCY!

BRAAAAAAP!

TRING! KASH!

TINKA!

RATTA-RATTA-BRRR!

RATTA-RATTA

SKOWIE! BREAK!

RATTIE!

BO JAKE AND HIS BOYS AREN'T NECESSARILY OUT TO KILL ANYONE! IT'S ALL CALCULATED TO CAUSE PANIC, CONFUSION AND AS MUCH DESTRUCTION AS POSSIBLE!

I-LOOK OUT... GULP!

IT'S A R-R-RANDY!

SO THIS IS LEO'S SPEAK- EASY HUH? WANT A SECOND RATE DIVE?

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE PUTTIN' AWM OUTTA BUSINESS!

AWRIGHT, YOU JEERAS! CLEAR OUTTA HERE! FUN'S OVER!

NOT YOU, POPS! WE'RE GONNA HAVE A LITTLE TALK!

I-LEAF'S F-TALK... BUT... BUT--!



SURE...
HAAAA...
JUST THE TWO
OF US!

N-WELL...
I... I COULD...
I - IF YOU
INSIST!



SIT DOWN, POPS!
I WANT ME SOME
ANSWERS!

PER OPENERS...
LEO LEGRETT!
WHERE IS HE?

OOOOOF!

THAT BUMP!
HOW SHOULD
I KNOW? HE
OWES ME THREE
WEEKS PAY... SO
I WANT! BUT
I DON'T NEVER
SEE HIM!



THE JOINT'S
GAPAN, BOSS. REC-
KON THE OLD GUY'S
TELLIN' YA STRAIGHT!
LEGRETTI MUSTA
TOOK IT ON THE
LAW!



YEAP! WELL,
JUST IN CASE YOU
SHOULD SEE YOUR
MISSING BOSS...

...YOU
GIVE HIM A
MESSAGE FROM ME!



SKING! TINKLE!
TINKLE!
TINKLE!
KLIK! BRATTA-BRATTA-BRAT!

TELL HIM THAT BIG
JAKE FINNEY'S TAKEN
OVER THE EAST SIDE!
LEGRETTI'S THROUGH!
YOU GET THAT, POPS?

YOUR
BOSS IS
WARMED
UP!



FROM AMIDST THE SPLAT-
TERED LIQUID AND BROKEN
GLASS, A VERY TINY ROBIN
EMERGES...



AH! I'M NOT AS SPERRY
AS I USED TO BE, MON!
TWO' MON! YE, AH! I'M STILL
A SCRAPPY!



BOB



...AN MEET ME
TOMORROW
NIGHT... AT
FINNEY'S
SPEAKEASY!
OR, AN WOULD
YA MIND NOT
HEARING THAT
BESSY ARD?
NO RESPECT-
ABLE MOB-
STER LIKES
T'EE SEEN IN
JEWELRY?"

MR. FINNEY, YOU AIN'T
GONNA BELIEVE THIS! LOOK
WHO JUST WALKED IN LIKE
HE OWNED THE PLACE!

LEGRETT!

THAT BUM JUST EARNED
HIMSELF A ONE-WAY TICKET
TO THE MORGUE!

GET 'EM
UP HERE,
BOYS!
NOW!

UPSTAIRS,
LEGRETT! THE
BOSS WANTS
TO SEE YOU!

I WANT
T'SEE HIM,
TOO, PUNK!

GGLEP?! I
SURE HOPE THIS
WORKS!

WELL,
WELL, LEO!
LONG TIME
NO SEE, PAL!
YOU DON'T
LOOK SO
GOOD!

HE! I'M
FINE, FINNEY!
IT'S YOU WHO
AIN'T GONNA BE
LOOKIN' SO GOOD
ONCE WE A MY
BOYS HERE GET
FINISHED WITH
YOU!

YOUR BOYS?
HA HA HA!
I DON'T SEE
NO BO--!
URK!

RIGHT
HERE,
FINNEY!
Y'WAGHT
SAY I
HAD 'EM
IN MY
POCKET!

ALL RIGHT
MEN...





end



COMING SOON!

JACQUE COCTEAU'S

CIRCUS OF THE BIZARRE

ASTOUNDING!

HORRIFYING

UNBELIEVABLE!

**BLOODCHILLING FREAKS OF NATURE
REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME!**

ADMISSION .50c CHILDREN: HALF PRICE







NO
NEED TO
PUSH! NO
NEED TO
SHOVE!

CHOICE SEATS FOR ALL
OF STOUT HEART! ADMISSION
TO A WORLD OF HORROR IS
ONLY FIFTY CENTS! COME
ONE, COME ALL!



YEAH!

WE WANT
A SHOW!

BRING
ON THE
FREAKS!



LADIES
AND GENTLE-
MEN...



... BEFORE WE
BEGIN OUR SHOW I
FEEL I MUST WARN
YOU!



WHAT YOU ARE
ABOUT TO SEE IS NOT FOR
THE FAINT-OF-HEART! I URGE
YOU ALL OF WEAK CONSTITUTION
TO PLEASE LEAVE NOW. YOUR
PRICE OF ADMISSION WILL
BE GLADLY REFUNDED!

AWW,
WE AIN'T
SCARED!

NO
WAY!

BRING
ON YER
WORST!



VERY WELL,
THEN! YOU HAVE
BEEN FORE-
WARNED!

SO
NOW, I
PRESENT
TO YOU



... JACQUE
COCTEAU'S ...



SOMEHOW THE SLAVE KNEW, IF HE COULD JUST REACH THE MARSH, HE WOULD BE SAFE! HIS PURSUERS WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND HIM IN ITS TRACKLESS DEPTHS! THE DAYS SINCE HIS ESCAPE FROM THE ROWING PITS OF A VIKING LONGBOAT WERE FILLED WITH A RED HAZE OF TORMENT! HIS HEART POUNDED TO THE POINT OF BURSTING! EVERY FIBER OF HIS BEING CRIED OUT IN UTTER EXHAUSTION!

YET THE SMELL OF THE MARSH STUNG HIS SENSES AND URGED HIM ONWARD! THE COOL WATERS SOOTHED HIS BODY STRENGTHENING HIM FOR A FINAL PUSH!



REFUGE WAS SO tantalizingly NEAR! IF HE COULD ONLY ATTAIN IT, HE WOULD FIND A NEW LIFE FOR HIMSELF... FREE OF A SLAVE'S CHAINS!

THE TEMPERED SWORD!



THE NORSEMEN
THEY'RE RIGHT
BEHIND ME! IF
I DON'T LOSE
THEM NOW,
THEY'LL KILL
ME FOR SURE!

THE SLAVE!
THERE HE GOES!
STOP HIM!

IRON RAIN SLICED THROUGH
THE AIR! WITH A FINAL
DESPERATE LUNGE THE
SLAVE DIVE, BARELY
AVOIDING INSTANT DEATH!



THERE'S NO
SIGN OF HIM! HE
COULD COME UP
ANYWHERE!

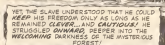
OUR HORSES
CAN NOT FOLLOW
HIM IN THE SWAMP!
HE'S AS GOOD AS
GONE!



MOMENTS
LATER...

THEY'RE LEAVING!
PRAISE GOD! NOW I
DETEST THEM! HOW I
WOULD KILL THEM,
GIVEN THE
CHANCE!

BUT, NOW... I AM
FREE OF THEIR PERVERSE
WHIPS FOREVER!



YET THE SLAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE COULD
KEEP HIS FREEDOM ONLY AS LONG AS HE
REMAINED CLEVER... AND CAUTIOUS! HE
STRUGGLED ONWARD, DEEPER INTO THE
WELCOMING DARKNESS OF THE MYSTERIOUS
FOREST!

THOUGH HE HAD ESCAPED HIS MASTERS, HE
WAS STILL A SLAVE, BOUND BY THE MERCILESS
CHAINS OF EXHAUSTION!



SO SO TIRED! CAN'T
GO ON! BUT I MUST!
I'M NEVER GOING
TO RETURN TO THOSE
SLAVE PITS!



HE COLLAPSED, FALL-
ING INTO A DEEP
TROUBLED SLEEP!



BUT THE SLAVE'S
FEVERED DREAMS
WERE DISTURBED...
BY THE INSISTENT
FLASHING OF A
BLINDING LIGHT!

THE LIGHT PULSED AND DANCED BASTARDLY,
DRAGING THE SLAVE FROM HIS DEATH-LIKE
TORPOR!

BY THE GODS!
WHAT IS IT?

A SWORD! YES! IT WAS
JUST WHAT THE SLAVE
NEEDED... TO SLAY HIS EN-
EMIES SHOULD THEY AGAIN
COME FOR HIM!

THE RADIANT METAL SEEMED TO HYPO-
TIZE THE SLAVE! IT WAS INSANE... BUT
WITHIN HIS MIND HE COULD ALMOST
HEAR THE WEAPON SPEAKING TO HIM!
"CLAIM ME! I AM YOURS," IT WHIS-
PERED WITH A VOICE LIKE LEAVES
CHUCKLING IN THE BREEZE!

CAUTIOUSLY HE
ADVANCED,
HIS HEART
POUNDRING.

IT... IT CAN'T
BE! A SWORD
CASTS SUCH
A GLOW?

YET, ONCE THE
GLISTENING
STEEL WAS WITH
IN HIS GRASP,
THE INTROD,
CAREFULLY
CULTIVATED BY
YEARS OF EN-
SLAVEMENT,
MISBEHAVEMENT
HAD VANISHED!

A MYSTERI-
OUS CALM
SETTLED
UPON THE
MAN! IT
WAS AS
THOUGH
HIS SOUL,
FOR THE
FIRST
TIME... HAD
FOUND
PEACE!

AND MORE... HE KNEW IT WAS
BECAUSE OF THE SWORD! THE
SWORD WHICH *CARRIED* HIS
INNER EAR WITH GENTLE WORDS
WHICH GUIDED HIM DEEPER
INTO THE MYSTERIOUS
FOREST...

...WHICH GUIDED HIM
TO A SMALL RUDE
HUT NESTLED SHU-
DLY AMONGST THE
TALL WINTER OAKS!

WHAT
SORCERY IS
THIS? HOW IS
IT THAT A
SWORD SPEAKS
TO ME?

AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS UNSPOKEN QUESTION, A GRATING VOICE WHISTLED FROM THE ALPS!



"COME, FORWARD, MY SON! DO NOT BE AFRAID!"

"AND ARE YOU, OLD MAN? WHAT ARE YOU PAINTING LIVING HERE IN THE WOODS?"

"MY DAUGHTER AND I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!"



"WE KNEW THAT SOMEONE SOONER OR LATER WOULD FIND THE SWORD! AND THAT IT, IN TURN, WOULD LEAD HIM TO US!"



"COME! FEED AND REST YOUR TIRED BODY WHILE WE EXPLAIN!"

"YOU SEE, MY SON, THE SWORD YOU NOW POSSESS IS NO ORDINARY WEAPON!"



"YES... MY SOUL WAS FILLED WITH HATRED FOR MY MASTERS! BUT... BUT NOW... IT SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!"

"THE SWORD HAS ASSIMILATED YOUR HATRED! I WILL EXPLAIN!"

"YOU SEE, MANY YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A VILLAGE WHICH WAS SINCE TURNED TO DUST! THE VILLAGE WAS PEACEFUL, TRANQUIL, AND PROSPEROUS, FILLED WITH GOOD MEN, WITH GENTLE SOULS!"



"YET, AS IN ALL GROUPS OF MEN, THERE WAS ONE WHO HAD HUMAN WHO CONSIDERED HIMSELF SUPERIOR TO HIS FELLOWS!"



"HE WAS CALLED THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH... BIGGER, STRONGER, MORE SKILLED THAN HIS UNEDUCATED BROTHERS!"

"TO FLAUNT HIS SUPERIORITY, HE HAD FASHIONED A SWORD! NOT FROM IRON OR BRASS... BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE KNEW THE WEAPON WOULD SET HIM APART FROM THE OTHERS... AND MAKE HIM FEEL EVEN STRONGER THAN THEM!"

"THE VILLAGERS WERE NO MATCH FOR THE RAIDERS. THEY WERE SLAUGHTERED WITHOUT MERCY!"

"YET THE GOOD CARED NOT FOR WEAPONS. FOR EVEN AS THE SWORD WAS WITHIN THE FORCE, INVADERS FROM THE NORTH-LANDS THUNDERED UPON THE VILLAGE, WANTONLY SPILLING INNOCENT BLOOD!"

"CONSUMED BY HIS OWN PERVERTED LUSTS, CAIN WAS OBVIOUS TO THE SLAUGHTER OF HIS VILLAGE! HIS TASK COMPLETED, HE BASKED IN THE SINISTER GLOW OF HIS WEAPON!"



"...UNTIL IT MET WITH THE STILL SMOLDERING STEEL!"



"HIS THOUGHTS WERE DARK, Musing OF THE POWER HE WOULD SOON WIELD OVER HIS FELLOW VILLAGERS!"



"SOME SAY THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THOSE EVIL THOUGHTS THAT CAIN WAS STRUCK DOWN!"

AND SO CAIN'S SWORD WAS TEMPERED WITH BLOOD! IT WAS THE BLOOD OF A GOOD MAN, A JUST MAN! A MAN WHOSE HEART HAS BEEN PURE UNTIL POILED WITH THE LUST FOR POWER!

"MORTALLY WOUNDED, HE FELL TO THE GROUND WHILE A TRAIL OF BLOOD CREEPED ACROSS THE DIRT FLOOR."



"AS CAIN LAY DYING, HE CAME TO UNDERSTAND THE FOLLY OF WHAT HE HAD DONE. IT WAS LAMENTABLE TO HIM! WATFOL! HE COULD HEAR THE SCREAMS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITHOUT...AND HE KNEW THEY WERE DYING BECAUSE OF HIM!"



"WITH WHAT LITTLE REMAINED OF HIS DYING STRENGTH, THE BLACKSMITH MANAGED TO PULL THE SPEAR FROM HIS CHEST AND GRAPPLE TO HIS FEET!"

"HE WAS WEAKENED BY THE SENSE-NUMBING AGONY OF ENCRUCHING DEATH."



"YET, HE PICKED UP HIS GLORIOUSLY SINFUL SWORD AND LASHED OUT AT THE MURDERING INVADERS!"



"WITH THE FEROCITY OF A MAN GONE **BERSERK**, THE BLACKSMITH TOOK A BLOODY TOLL UPON THE BARBARIC INVADERS!"

"CAN AND HIS SWORD TASTED BLOOD THAT DAY... AND FOUND THE TASTE SWEET!"

PLING!

"THE SWORD CUT THROUGH STEEL AS EASILY AS THOUGH IT WERE HUMAN FLESH! AND FLESH ITSELF WITHERED CRIMSON AT ITS WEREST TOUCH!"

"YET THE SWEET GLORY OF VENGEANCE WAS SOMEHOW BITTER! FOR THE BLACKSMITH REALIZED THAT BY TASTING BLOOD HE HAD LOST HIS SOUL!"

"AND THE SWEETNESS OF REVENGE WAS NOT WORTH THE DAMNATION OF ETERNITY!"

"THE ANGEL OF DEATH FOLDED HER WINGS AROUND CAN THAT DAY... BUT NOT BEFORE THE BLACKSMITH HAD WILLED HIS SOUL INTO THE HEART OF THE SWORD!"

"IT IS WITHIN THIS WEAPON THAT CAN'S SOUL RESTS FOR ALL ETERNITY... SPEAKING SOFTLY TO THOSE WHO WOULD USE IT, AS HE DID TO KILL!"

"LISTEN TO THE SWORD, MY SON! HEAR ITS GENTLE LESSON!"

"YOU ARE FREE OF YOUR SLAVE CHAINS NOW! FORGIVE YOUR MASTERS! TEMPER YOUR EMOTIONS! DO NOT ALLOW HATRED TO ENSLAVE YOU FOREVER!"

"LISTEN, MY SON, TO THE WELL-TEMPERED SWORD!"

WORLD WAR II, WHO CAN FORGET THE NIGHTWARD-H TERROR THAT IT THROST UPON THE WORLD? IT CHANGED US ALL MORE THAN WE'D CARE TO REMEMBER. WE CARRY THE SCARS WITH US EVEN NOW...AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

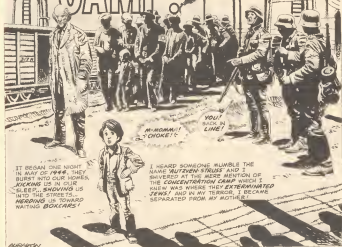
THEY SHUN THIS PLACE TO THIS VERY DAY, DON'T THEY, ANTHONY?

INDEED THEY DO, MY FRIEND!

BUT WE...EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WE KNOW WE WOULD ONE DAY RETURN TO THIS DEATH CAMP!

AUTZEN STRUSS! THE SHEL OF THE CREMATORIUM LINGERS STILL!

LIVING DEATH CAMP!



IT BEGAN ONE NIGHT IN MAY OF 1944. THEY BURST INTO OUR HOMES, KICKING US IN OUR SLEEP...SHOVING US INTO THE STREETS...HERDING US TOWARD WAITING BOXCARS!

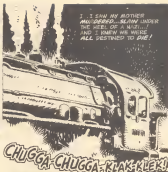
I HEARD SOMEONE MUMBLE THE NAME 'AUTZEN-STRUSS' AND I SHIVERED AT THE MERE MENTION OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMP WHICH I KNEW WAS WHERE THEY EXTERMINATED JEWS! AND IN MY TERROR, I BECAME SEPARATED FROM MY MOTHER!





YOU, JUDEN...! WHY DO YOU MOVE SO SLOWLY? WE ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE!





I KNEW IT DIDN'T MATTER *HOW* LONG WE SPENT IN THAT DARK, FOUL SMELLING BOXCAR, WITH NO FOOD, NO WATER... AND NO HOPE OF SOMETHING! FOR AT THE END OF OUR JOURNEY WAITED INEVITABLE DEATH!



IN THE INSUFFERABLY LONG HOURS THAT FOLLOWED THE OLD MAN BECAME A SOURCE OF **STRENGTH** AND **ENCOURAGEMENT** FOR US ALL...



THE OLD MAN'S SMILE WAS A CHILLING **MIRTH-LESS** THING! I TREMBLE TO THIS VERY DAY WHEN I THINK OF IT, AND OF THE **HORROR** OF WHICH IT FOREWARNED!



OF THE REMINDER OF OUR
JOURNEY, I REMEMBER LITTLE...



...FOR A LETHARGY NEXT UNTO
DEATH ITSELF SEEMED TO SEAL
SLOWLY OVER ME, AND I SUC-
CUMBERED TO A FITFUL, WORRY-
SOME SLEEP!

THE OLD MAN OCCUPIED
MY DREAMS... OR MORE
PRECISELY, MY NIGHT
MARES...

SUCH
MONSTROUS
EVIL! HOW
CAN THEY
DO SUCH
THINGS TO
MY PEOPLE?



...AS HE SLOWLY MADE HIS WAY THROUGH THE SWAY-
ING, BUMPING BOXCAR THAT BROUGHT US EVER
NEARER **AUTZVEN-STRASS**, TO THE VERY GATES
OF HELL ITSELF!

RISE, MY FRIENDS! SLEEP!
SOON WE SHALL BE TRULY
UNITED!



WE MOVED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER OF US... FOLLO-
WING EACH IN TURN, AND
BRINGING PEACE... AND
HOPE TO ALL!

NO ONE... NOTHING...
WILL EVER HARM US
AGAIN!



AND THE
TRAIN
ROCKED ON
THROUGH THE DARK,
GLOAMING
NIGHT!



MY NIGHTMARES SHIFTED THEN, TO THAT TIME ONLY HOURS BEFORE... WHEN WE WERE ROUSED FROM OUR BEDS BY THE SOUNDS OF GUNSHOTS AND SCREAMS...

MY FATHER KNEW THERE WAS LITTLE WE COULD DO TO STOP THE SOLDIERS! BUT THAT DID NOT STOP HIM FROM TRYING TO PROTECT HIS FAMILY!



FATHER... WHAT TERRIBLE THING BEFALLS OUR VILLAGE?

IT IS THE NAZIS, ANTHONY! THEY... THEY ARE COMING FOR US!



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? WHY HAVE WE DONE NOTHING? YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!



WE HAVE EVERY RIGHT, JUDEN. WE ARE WARRIORS OF THE GLORIOUS THIRD REICH!

BDDA-BDDA-BRP



F-FATHER...



IT IS THEN THAT MOTHER AND I, ALONG WITH EVERY ONE OF OUR NEIGHBORS... WERE HERDED LIKE ANIMALS INTO THE WAITING TRUCKS.

IF YOU CAN'T DO THIS...

PLEASE!



...WHILE THE NAZIS DESTROYED OUR HOMES, OUR VERY WAY OF LIFE!

PLEASE!

KRASH!



WHOOOM!

MY NIGHTMARES ENDED AS THE TRAIN SLOWED AND PULLED TO A STOP WITHIN THE DREADED CONFINES OF THE NAZI DEATH CAMP! THE STENCH OF BURNED HUMAN FLESH WAPTED THICKLY THROUGH THE AIR, BUT STRANGELY, DESPITE THE TRAGIC LOSS OF BOTH MY MOTHER AND FATHER... I WAS UNAFRAID!



NEVER BEFORE HAD I KNOWN SUCH A FEELING OF DEEP, INNER PEACE!



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SINCE BEFORE EVEN THE EARLIEST
MEN COULD REMEMBER, THE LAND
HAD BEEN **FOULED** AND STAINED
DEEP WITH **BLOOD**...

...AS IF TARNISHED BY THE
BLOOD OF **WARRIORS** SPILLED
IN ANCIENT **BATTLES!**

THINGS LURKED THERE...

...WAITING FOR THE
THE **FOOLHARDY**
THE **DOOMED!**

Knight Errant

THE INCESSANTLY DRIVING RAIN
THUNDERED AGAINST HIS BATTLE
WORN ARMOR AS THE DETERMINED
LORD ELLENSHAW, KNIGHT CRU-
SADER, AND MAN OF HONOR,
SLOSHED THROUGH THE CLOYING
MUD.

THE CRAB-LIKE **WORM**, HEARING
HIS APPROACH, SLOWLY **ROSE** OUT
OF THE CLINGING MISTS BEFORE
HIM! ITS SINISTER EYES **GLEAMED**
WITH **SATISFACTION!** ITS PREY
WAS FOOLISHLY **DELIVERING** ITSELF
INTO THE CREATURE'S **MAW!**



WARILY THE KNIGHT
UNSHEATHED HIS
BLADE...



...THEN FROZE IN
UTTER TERROR!



SUDDENLY THE KNIGHT'S
BLOOD QUICKENED WITH
THE EXCITEMENT OF
BATTLE! HIS SENSES
HONED BY COUNTLESS
TRIALS WITH DEATH,
WARNED HIM THAT THE
MONSTER WAS ABOUT...

WAS IT THIS NAME-
LESS MONSTER'S
SORCERY THAT
SENT THE FOUL
STENCH OF FEAR
WAFTING THROUGH
HIS ARMOR?



...TO ATTACK!



THE CREATURE
BEARED ITS
GAPING MAW
READY TO
DEVOUR THE
KNIGHT
HUNGRILY!

THEN, AS IF
PREORDAINED
THE MONSTER
STUMBLER,
LEAVING ITSELF
VULNERABLE
FOR ONE BREEF
INSTANT!
THE KNIGHT LEAPED
FORWARD! AND
THE KNICKED STEEL
OF HIS BLADE BIT
DEEPLY INTO THE
UNDERBELLY OF
HIS FOE!



AS HE WATCHED
THE GIANT MONSTER
WATERS IN THE
THROWS OF
DEATH, THE
TRIUMPHANT
KNIGHT STOOD
TALL IN THE
DRIVING
RAIN,
LOOMING
OVER HIS
VANQUISHED
OPPONENT!

PRIDE SURGED
THROUGH EVERY
FIBER OF HIS
BEING. HE WAS
LORD ELLEN-
SHAW... SISTER
OF WIDOWS.

AS IF IN RESPONSE TO HIS RISING PIETY THE
HEAVENS SEEMED TO OPEN UP, THE MOST
ALLOPIOUS OF VOICES DRIFTED TO HIS EARS.
IT WAS AN ANGEL SINGING TO... HIM!



ELLENHORN GAZED HUMBLY IN POWERLESS
SUPPLICATION, OVERWHELMED BY THE
HEAVENLY SOUNDS OF PURITY AND INNOCENCE!



THEN,
MAJESTICALLY,
AS IF BY MAGIC,
THE CLOUDS
PARTED, THE
RAIN AND THUNDER
LEACHED FROM
THEM! AND THERE,
AMIDST THEIR
ALABASTER SPLENDOR,
HE COULD SEE HIS
ANGEL AND THE
VALIANT KNIGHT'S
HEART WAS
FILLED WITH
LOVE!

WONDER
STRENGTHENED
HIS FATIGUED
WIND AND ACHING
LIMBS, LEADING
NEW VITALITY TO
HIS SPIRIT! THE
ANGEL SANG TO HIM
OF PERIL... OF
ANOTHER BEAST
WHICH HAD FOULED
HER PURITY... AND
RUTHLESSLY TAKEN
HER LIFE!



AND LORD ELLEN-
SHAW UNDER-
STOOD THAT
HE MUST
PRESS
ONWARD,
NO MATTER
WHAT THE
OBSTACLES...



... TO **SLAY**
THE FOUL
DEMON
WHICH
HAD
TAKEN
THE LIFE
OF HIS
ANGEL!

HE WAS HELP-
LESS BEFORE
HIS OWN
ROMANTIC
VISION
OF THAT
WOMAN...
TOTALLY
SUB-
SERVENT
TO HER
BEAUTY
AND
VIRTUE!



EVEN AS HER
OVERPOWERING
IMAGE **FADED**
FROM HIS MIND,
HE KNEW HE
WOULD
NEVER
KNOW
PEACE
UNTIL
HIS LOVE
HAD BEEN
AVENGED!

HIS VERY SOUL WAS
TORTURED AND AT
THE **MERCY** OF THE
BLACK **HATRED**
WHICH DWELLED
THERE...THE UN-
DYING NEED FOR
REVENGE!



HE WAS DRAWN...A MAN
POSSESSED, TOWARDS AN
OMINOUS **CASTLE** WHICH
TOWERED LIKE A **MONSTER**
AMIDST THE STENCH-LADEN
DEATH-MISTS OF HELL!

HIS MISSION WAS
HOLY... AND JUST!
IT WAS A MISSION
GIVEN HIM BY
HEAVEN ITSELF?
HE WOULD LET
NOTHING STAND
IN HIS WAY!



NOTHING!



WHEN THE
BEAST ROSE
FROM THE
SMOKING MOUNT
OF THE CAMP
WAS LIKE A BOILING
MOUNTAIN, BLIND
OUT THE SUN! THE
RIDE DARK ODOR
SMOTHERED THE
KNIGHT, NEARLY
OVERCOMING HIM
AS IT FILLED THE
AIR WITH GALES OF
NAUSEOUS MURK!

HIS LEGS TREMBLED
THREATENING TO GIVE
WAY! BUT LORD ELL
SHAW WOULD NOT FEEL
TO EMBRACE COWARD-
ICE, EVEN IN THE FACE
OF THIS HELLSPAWN!
WOULD BE AN
ETERNAL SHAME
THAT NOT EVEN
DEATH
COULD
OBLITER-
ATE!

THE CREATURE OPENED ITS
HIDEOUS MAW, AND FLAMES
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SPARKED
IN THE PIT OF HELL BELCHED
FORTH FOR A SECOND TIME!



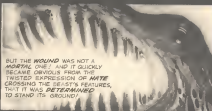
SIR ELLENSHAW'S ARMOR HEATED
AND REDDENED. NOXIOUS SUL-
FURIC SMOKE FILLED HIS LUNGS,
STRANGLING HIM. BUT HE
WOULD NOT SURRENDER! HE
WOULD DEFEAT THIS THING...OR
DIE TRYING!



HE WIELDED HIS BLADE WITH
VALIANT SKILL AND THE GRACE OF
A WARRIOR! THE STEEL WHISTLED
THROUGH THE BURNING AIR, AND
WENT DEEP INTO THE ARMORED
FLESH, GRINDING AGAINST ROCK-
HARD BONE!



THE MONSTER HOWLED IN AGONY AS THE KNIGHT MANGLED ITS WRIST WITH A SLICING THRUST OF HIS SWORD! IT SWARLED, ENRAGED, AND A GUST OF FETID BREATH WASHED OVER THE KNIGHT!



BUT THE WOUND WAS NOT A MORTAL ONE! AND IT QUICKLY BECAME OBVIOUS FROM THE TWISTED EXPRESSION OF HATE CROSSING THE BEAST'S FEATURES, THAT IT WAS DETERMINED TO STAND ITS GROUND!

THE MONSTER LUNGED AT HIM, ONCE MORE, SURPRISINGLY AGILE FOR A CREATURE OF SUCH GREAT SIZE.



THE FLAMES BATHED THE KNIGHT AGAIN... AND HE REALIZED THAT HE WAS INDEED DEALING WITH FORCES MUCH DARKER THAN HE HAD SUSPECTED. THIS WAS NO ORDINARY BEAST! THE PUNGENT ODOR OF BRIMSTONE CAME TO HIS NOSTRILS AS IF TO CONFIRM HIS THOUGHTS! AND AS HE BURNED, HE HAD ONLY THE MEMORY OF HIS LOVE TO RESTRAIN HIM FROM THE BRINK OF MADNESS.



THE GIRL! HE COULD ALMOST HEAR HER AS HE BATTLED DESPERATELY TO AVENGE HER HONOR... HER LIFE!



HER VOICE, HER LOVELY VOICE...!





SHE
SANG
TO HIM
ONCE
MORE...
BUT HER
SONG WAS
DIFFERENT
NOW...AND WHY...
WHY DID SHE
LOOK...LIKE THIS?

IT WAS HIS LAST VISION OF HER! AS HE
TRANSPICED STARRING AT THE IMAGE
IN URITY, HE DID NOT SEE THE
UNDS OF REPTILIAN
ROD HIM / THE MONSTER'S
E DRAGND AND A
FLAME LASHED
A HE DID NOT SEE HIS
NO / HIS FINAL THOUGHT
INTO ETERNITY WAS



...WHY?



ERROR! ERROR!
PLANNED SCENARIO
DISRUPTED!

SUPERVISING
TECHNICIANS
REPORT!
SUPERVISING
TECHNICIANS
REPORT!



M-MAYBE HE
ISN'T, LIZ!




OH, GOD,
SIMON! I
TOLD YOU!
LOOK AT
HIM! HE...
HE'S
DEAD!



BULL! YOU
PLAYED THAT
DAMNED HOLD-
GRAM TAPE AT THE
WRONG TIME! YOU
EVEN PLAYED THE
WRONG DAMN
TAPE! YOU DIS-
TRACTED HIM
DURING THE
FIGHT YOU
STUPID--

GET BACK
THERE AND
PULL THE
PLUG ON THAT
DAMNED
LIZARD!



THE DRAGON'S OFF LIZ. HEY LIZ! DON'T WORRY ACCIDENTS ARE COVERED IN THE POLICY THEY SIGN. WE'RE NOT LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE...!

SHUT UP SIMON! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER WORD!



GOD I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! THESE MOUSY LITTLE MUTANTS FROM THE BOARD SIGHTS COMING HERE GETTING JUZZED UP ON DRUGS JUST SO THEY CAN COME INTO THIS LOUSY PARK AND PRETEND OH GOD!

HE'S FINISHED... THE POOR LITTLE FREAK!



THIS IS IT DAMNIT! I'M QUITTING RIGHT NOW! THERE'VE BEEN TOO MANY LIKE THIS LATELY. IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY WANT IT TO HAPPEN, AS IF THEY WANT TO DIE HERE INSTEAD OF LIVING THE WAY THEY ARE!

BUT LIZ... WHAT DO I TELL THE RELATIVES? YOU... YOU ALWAYS HANDLED THAT!

TELL THEM...

...THAT HE DIED BECAUSE HE WASN'T ABLE TO DREAM!

card

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